

Message Text

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:TSPA:UK

SUBJECT: NASA LASER RANGING STATIONS AT GRAND TURK AND
BERMUDA

REF: STATE 59330 AND LONDON 2388

1. SUMMARY: WHILE NASA SHARES UK CONCERN RE POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO PERSONS FROM USE OF LASER, IT APPEARS IMPRACTICAL WITHIN TIME CONSTRAINTS TO MODIFY EXTENSIVELY PRESENT SYSTEM. NASA REQUESTS EMBASSY IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE CONTACT POINT WITHIN APPROPRIATE UK MINISTRY TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF UK CONCERNS, NASA SYSTEMS CAPABILITY AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS MODES OF OPERATION.

2. NASA SHARES UK CONCERN RE POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO EYES OF AIR CREWS AND PASSENGERS FROM EXPOSURE TO LASER RADIATION.

3. FOLLOWING IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR EMBASSY USE CON-
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CERNING PROPOSED OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:

A. HOT LINE HAS BEEN INSTALLED BETWEEN LASER SITE AND RADAR APPROACH CONTROL ROOM AT NAVAL AIR STATION BERMUDA.

B. NAVAL AIR STATION BERMUDA WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ALL LASER OPERATIONS.

C. NAS WILL RECEIVE CHARTS DEPICTING GEOS-C GROUND TRACKS.

D. LASER OPERATIONS WILL NOT BE CONDUCTED UNLESS THE CEILING AND VISIBILITY ARE UNRESTRICTED IN THE PORTION OF THE LASER FIRING AREA TO BE USED.

E. THERE WILL BE AN EXCHANGE OF KNOWN AIR TRAFFIC BETWEEN NAVAL AIR STATION BERMUDA AND LASER SITE WHENEVER LASER OPERATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED.

F. LASER OPERATIONS WILL BE SUSPENDED WHENEVER BERMUDA NAVAL AIR STATION SURVEILLANCE RADAR IS INOPERATIVE. NAVAL AIR STATION RADAR IS AN ASR-7 OR FA-8200 OPERATING AT FREQUENCY OF 2800 MHZ WITH A POWER OF 425 KW., AND A RANGE OF 60 NM ON A ONE-SQUARE METER TARGET.

G. GRAND TRUK AUXILIARY AIR FIELD DOES NOT HAVE A SURVEILLANCE RADAR NOR AN APPROACH CONTROL RADAR BECAUSE DENSITY OF AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS DOES NOT WARRANT NEED FOR

SUCH RADARS. HOWEVER, THE MOBILE LASER SYSTEM AT GRAND TRUK WILL HAVE AN/MPQ 29 SURVEILLANCE RADAR IN OPERATION WHENEVER LASER OPERATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED, AND OPERATIONS WILL BE SUSPENDED WHENEVER RADAR BECOMES INOPERATIVE. IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE EXCHANGE OF KNOWN AIR TRAFFIC BETWEEN AIR FIELD AND LASER SITE WHENEVER THE LASER SYSTEM IS BEING OPERATED.

4. NASA BELIEVES THAT BEST WAY TO PROCEED AT THIS POINT IN VIEW OF TIME CONSTRAINTS IS TO IDENTIFY OFFICE WITHIN UK GOVERNMENT THAT NASA GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER TECHNICAL PERSONNEL COULD CONTACT DIRECTLY. PURPOSE TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PRESENT SYSTEM, PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED
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WITH UNDERTAKING LINKAGE AND/OR INCREASED RADAR CAPABILITY AS PROPOSED, AND EVALUATION OF RISKS INVOLVED. FYI - NASA ALSO BELIEVES SUCH CONTACT NECESSARY TO DETERMINE REAL SCOPE AND REASON FOR UK CONCERN IN ORDER TO WORK TOGETHER TO GET ACCEPTABLE OPERATING SYSTEM SOONEST.
END FYI.

5. NEITHER BERMUDA OR GRAND TRUK SYSTEM AS YET OPERATIONAL.

WOULD EXPECT BERMUDA TO BE READY APPROX MID APRIL. HOWEVER
UNTIL SAFETY QUESTIONS RESOLVED, NEITHER SYSTEM WILL BE
BROUGHT UP OR CHECKED OUT.

6. IN VIEW OF IMMINENCE OF GEOS-C LAUNCH (NOW SCHEDULED
FOR 1ST WEEK APRIL) NASA WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST POS-
SIBLE DESIGNATION OF POINT OF CONTACT IN UK. PLEASE
IDENTIFY BY RETURN CABLE IF POSSIBLE - NAME, OFFICE,
PHONE AND TELEX NUMBER. INGERSOLL

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